

Top Secret

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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21 April 1967

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Information as of 1600
21 April 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Military activities in South Vietnam remained at a low ebb throughout the past 24 hours.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Communist units continue to evade allied forces of Operation JUNCTION CITY in northern Tay Ninh Province (Paras. 1-3). The harassment of allied shipping to Saigon has been increasing and is the result of an order to Group 10, a Viet Cong unit in the Rung Sat Special Region (Paras. 4-7).

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Attacks against allied airfields in the Viet Cong MR V will be increased, according to a recent rallier (Paras. 11-12).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Constituent Assembly deliberations on the electoral laws are scheduled to begin next week (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi has rejected Secretary of State Rusk's proposal for enlarging the DMZ (Para. 1).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Enemy military forces normally associated with the Communist War Zone "C" are continuing evasive tactics against the sweeps being conducted by allied troops of the four-battalion Operation JUNCTION CITY.

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Harassment of Allied Shipping Between Saigon and the Sea

4. A captured Viet Cong document suggests that the recent upsurge in Communist harassment of allied shipping in the Long Tau River, a major shipping channel, which leads to Saigon from Vung Tau on the South China Sea, has been the direct result of an order issued to Group 10--the Viet Cong Rung Sat Special Region located in Quang Xuyen and Can Gio districts of Gia Dinh Province.

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5. The latest of the recent series of attacks came early on 20 April when a US Navy LST received five rounds of 75-mm. recoilless rifle fire 14 miles southeast of Saigon on the Long Tau River. Almost simultaneously, a South Vietnamese landing craft and four US minesweepers nearby received automatic weapons fire, and one minesweeper was hit. Since late 1966 US, South Vietnamese, and British ships have frequently been the targets of Communist attacks from concealed locations along the river bank. Allied minesweepers, attempting to keep the channel open, have also been subjected to increased enemy harassment.

6. According to the captured document, which is apparently a transcript of a speech delivered by the Viet Cong Group 10 commander on 31 January 1967, the group was ordered in October to launch a concerted campaign to harass all shipping channels in its area of operations and to concentrate particularly on the Long Tau River "since this was the allies' only water route from Vung Tau to Saigon." The document also revealed that the shelling of the National Day Parade in Saigon on 1 November 1966 was the work of a unit subordinate to Group 10.

7. A second document, issued by Group 10 on 1 January 1967, contained an official communiqué addressed to civilians in the area warning them that all "ships, ferry boats, lighters, and passenger carriers" traveling the Long Tau and other rivers in the Rung Sat area "without proper authorization from the National Liberation Front" would be destroyed.

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Enemy Plans for Increased Aggressiveness Against US Air Bases

11. The headquarters of the Viet Cong Military Region V (MR V) has ordered that more attacks be directed against allied air bases, according to [REDACTED]

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12. The directive to strike at air bases was purportedly issued because allied air strikes on Communist positions and installations have had the greatest effect in lowering morale of the enemy troops. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] / successful attacks against US installations demonstrate the vulnerability of allied rear areas and thus boost Viet Cong morale and prestige. Another valid explanation for the planned aggressiveness against this type of target [REDACTED] is that it is possible for small sapper units to cause maximum damage with minimum casualties, logistics, and planning.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Constituent Assembly activity this week was limited to the election of the remaining new officers to chair the committees which will oversee the electoral process and other special assembly tasks. Following formation of the committees, the assembly recessed for a week to allow research time.

2. The government has requested that the assembly complete the electoral laws by the end of April, but some deputies reportedly think May is probably more realistic.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi's expected negative response to Secretary of State Rusk's recent proposal for the creation of an additional ten-mile-wide neutral area on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) came in a routinely worded Foreign Ministry statement broadcast on 21 April. The statement underscored that the DRV had "always" and "correctly" implemented the 1954 Geneva agreements including the statute on the DMZ and alleged that Secretary Rusk's proposal was a "trick" aimed at "camouflaging the US war escalation and violation of the whole of the 1954 Geneva agreements." Moreover, the statement went on to list what it alleged were repeated US violations of the neutral character of the DMZ, and to demand that the Communist terms for a settlement of the conflict be accepted by the US.

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